

Rubric: Narrative Essay

ESSAY GOALS

	Excellent: The writer exceeds basic requirements in achieving this essay goal.	Good: It's clear that the writer fully achieves this essay goal.	Fair: This is achieved to some extent, and/or it is possible to see an effort to achieve this essay goal.	Goal not met: it is unclear how the writer is meeting or making an effort to meet this essay goal.
The writer uses detail and description to convey a narrative. (4 points)	The narrative is conveyed in concrete and specific terms, using sensory language, and avoiding cliché and dead metaphor.	The writer uses descriptive language to articulate a detailed narrative.	There is some descriptive language, but it seems disconnected from the narrative, or is difficult to understand.	There is an abundance of abstract language and/or cliché and dead metaphor.
The subject of the writer's essay is related to the theme of the course. (3 points)	There is a clear and consistent connection between the subject of the essay and the theme of the course.	There is a clear connection between the subject of the essay and the theme of the course.	The theme of the course is named, but it is incidental rather than central to the writing.	The theme of the course is absent from the essay, or only mentioned in passing.
The student articulates a clear personal experience and uses it to reach larger	While the narration of a personal experience is central to the essay, the writer analyzes this experience and reflects on its significance.	The experience described by the writer is central to the essay. The writer also offers some analysis of the experience.	The writer's experience factors into the essay, but it is not given sustained attention OR it factors into the essay, but it	The writer's experience is recorded without any reflection on or analysis of its larger implications, OR the essay makes broad general conclusions unconnected to

conclusions. (4 points)			seems unrelated to the general topic and purpose of the essay.	personal experience.
The essay is organized to convey the writer's ideas as clearly as possible. (2 points)	Each paragraph presents and develops a central idea or event and offers a clear and smooth transition to the next paragraph. The first paragraph effectively draws the reader in and introduces the subject of the essay, and the final paragraph synthesizes the writer's conclusions.	Each paragraph has a clear focus and an obvious connection to the paragraphs that precede and follow it. There are distinct introductory and concluding paragraphs.	Paragraphs are either crowded with ideas, or too short, breaking in unexpected places. The essay lacks a clear conclusion, either ending abruptly or trailing off.	It is difficult to determine the focus of each paragraph. It is not clear how one paragraph relates to the next. The introduction and conclusion seem disconnected from the body of the essay.
The grammar and style of the essay are consistent with expectations of academic writing established by the professor. (2 points)	The writer's choice of words is precise and appropriate to an academic context. The active voice prevails over the passive voice, and sentence structure is varied. The essay is free of sentence fragments and run-ons. The subjects and verbs of sentences agree. There are no spelling errors.	Grammar and style pose no barrier to understanding the writer's ideas. The essay is largely free of sentence fragments and run-ons, subject-verb disagreement, and spelling errors.	On the whole, it is possible to understand the main ideas the writer is conveying. There are some passages that may be difficult to follow because of imprecise word choice, unclear pronoun use, and/or subject-verb disagreement.	Many sentence fragments or run-ons make it difficult to follow the writer's ideas. It is not always clear what the subject of a sentence is. The tone of the writing may be inappropriate for an academic context or it may be developed inconsistently throughout the essay. It does not seem the essay has been proofread for spelling errors.

Questions for Student Discussion of Rubric

- What would it look like for you to provide excellent detail and description in your essay?
- Can you think of something that you've read that is an example of good descriptive writing?
- Find a descriptive passage in something we've read for class, and explain what makes the description effective.
- In your own words, how would you explain the theme of this course to someone who is not in this class? What are some topics related to the theme of the course? Why do you think those topics are related to the theme of the course?
- What do you think it means to use a personal experience to reach larger conclusions? What would it mean if you just shared a personal experience without reaching larger conclusions through it?
- What does it mean for a paragraph to be organized? What might be confusing in a paragraph that is not clearly organized?
- What does it mean for an essay to be organized? What are some of the strategies you can use to help organize an essay?
- You are writing a narrative essay, but you are also writing in an academic context. What are some of the expectations that you think exist for this kind of writing?
- How do you differentiate between language that is appropriate for academic writing, and the kind of language you might use in other contexts, such as texts, tweets, or conversation with friends?